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Professional Support Announced for
California Marine Life Protection Act Blue Ribbon Task Force

SACRAMENTO - Phil Isenberg, chair of the Blue Ribbon Task Force for the California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative, today announced key professional support to the task force.

John J. Kirlin has been engaged as executive director, Michael L. Weber as senior project manager and Melissa Miller-Henson as operations & communications manager.

Chair Isenberg said, "John is a nationally known public policy and public process expert who will ensure that the body of scientific evidence, together with informed opinion and citizen involvement, is merged into our final recommendations. We have an ambitious schedule and set of products to develop and John and these other talented professionals have committed themselves to helping us to meet our objectives."

Kirlin has supported similar blue ribbon task forces in over three decades of experience in policy analysis, administration and finance directed at complex public problems, especially in California. The task forces he has supported include the Governor's Commission on Gaming (Indiana), LA 2000 and the Committee of 21 for the League of California Cities. His areas of deepest policy expertise include state-local fiscal relationships, land use, and environmental and species protection policies. He has also successfully served in administrative capacities. Through the National Academy of Public Administration, of which he is an elected fellow, he has served as an advisor on environmental policy to the United States Congress and to the United States Environmental Protection Agency. He also served as a panel member in an assessment of the National Marine Sanctuary Program.

As a professor, he authored, coauthored or edited several books and nearly a hundred articles on topics ranging from broad administrative theory through fiscal limits to municipal services. He was founding editor of the annual volume, *California Policy Choices* (1984-95). He is a director with LECG, a global expert services firm. Kirlin has been retained as an expert witness by local governments, corporations, private interests and the State of California.

Michael L. Weber has 30 years experience in marine policy, including four years as the marine advisor to the California Fish and Game Commission, four years service as special assistant to the director of the National Marine Fisheries Service, and 10 years as vice president of programs at the Center for Marine Conservation. His books include *From Abundance to Scarcity: A History of U.S. Marine Fisheries Policy* (2001), *Fish, Markets and Fishermen* (1999 with S. Iudicello and R. Wieland) and *The Wealth of Oceans* (1995). He also is co-author with Burr Heneman of *Guide to California's Marine Life Management Act* (2000).

As a policy analyst with the California Resources Agency for over 10 years, Melissa Miller-Henson researched and analyzed policy options and represented the secretary for resources on a variety of natural resource issues, including ocean and coastal resource management, wild and scenic rivers, and the California-Mexico border environment. Miller-Henson was a writer and editor of numerous ocean and coastal resource management documents for the State of California, including the statewide strategy, *California's Ocean Resources: An Agenda for the Future*. She also oversaw general operations and program development as vice chair for the international California and the World Ocean conferences held in 1997 and 2002. Most recently she worked for the California Department of Fish and Game as liaison to the Resources Agency to implement the Marine Life Protection Act.

Today Fish and Game Director Ryan Broddrick also announced the appointment of John Ugoretz as the department's senior policy advisor to the MLPA Initiative. As a senior marine biologist with the Department of Fish and Game, John was responsible for the planning and management of marine protected areas throughout the state, including acting as the mandate team coordinator for the Marine Life Protection Act and Channel Islands Marine Reserves processes. In his 12 years with DFG, John has been involved in a variety of projects, including monitoring stocks of Pacific herring, SCUBA surveys of marine protected areas and rockfish in Monterey and Big Sur, coordinating the pelagic shark tagging program in Long Beach, and abalone and sea urchin monitoring and management in Santa Barbara. John is a DFG research SCUBA diver, a member of the department's Diving Safety Board, an avid angler and spear fisherman, and a U.S. Coast Guard licensed captain.

Kirlin, Weber, Miller-Henson and Ugoretz are the first four professionals on the steering committee that will oversee the daily operations of the Marine Life Protection Act Initiative and assist the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force in achieving its charge of four specific goals:

- Oversee preparation of a statewide guide for developing a marine protected area master plan.
- Create a pilot project, in an area along the central coast, which will identify potential networks of marine protected areas.
- Develop a strategy for long-term MLPA funding.
- Make recommendations for improved coordination of marine protected areas with key federal agencies.

This initiative is possible through the efforts of private and government partners who are providing funding and in-kind services; these contributors include the California Resources Agency, California Department of Fish and Game, Resources Legacy Fund Foundation, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and MPA Science Institute of the National Marine Protected Areas Center.

For more information about the MLPA Initiative, task force members, or the first task force meeting, please visit the initiative website at <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/mlpa>.